



DECISION MEMO
2020 CDOT STATE HIGHWAY 14 SAFETY REPAIR PROJECT
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
ARAPAHO & ROOSEVELT NATIONAL FORESTS AND PAWNEE
NATIONAL GRASSLAND
CANYON LAKES RANGER DISTRICT
LARIMER COUNTIES, COLORADO

DECISION

I have decided to authorize a minor special use for the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to implement safety repairs and improvements on National Forest Service lands along State Highway 14 in Poudre Canyon between mileposts 83.9 and 121.22 in Larimer County, Colorado.

The proposed improvements along the existing state highway are needed to provide long-term dependability and safety to the route. Some portions of the overall project intersect with National Forest System (NFS) lands thus triggering the need for authorization from the U.S. Forest Service.

Due to the length of work being done along SH 14B, the work has been broken out into six Segments (i.e., Segment 1 through 6). Each Project segment will consist of full-depth shoulder widening, followed by placement of a two-inch-thick layer of hot milled asphalt (HMA) as a reflective crack interlayer, and in Segment 4 topped by a high friction surface treatment. Additional improvements include adding rumble strips, sign replacement, pavement markings, and culvert cleaning. Only a portion of the overall project will intersect with NFS lands and the majority of it will occur within the Wild & Scenic River Cache la Poudre River Recreation River corridor which is primarily managed by the USFS. Refer to the map images included in this document for proximity of the intersection.

Below is a list of activities for the full CDOT project, only some of which will occur on NFS lands. While the overall project spans several miles of State Highway 14, the segmented work affects less than five acres of NFS lands.

Segment 1 (approx. half on NFS)

MP 83.9	Approach to Segment 1
MP 84.9	Begin SH 14B Safety Improvements ² : HMA overlay; 2' shoulder widening; safety edge; rumble strips; and tree removal.
MP 85.2	Clean culvert
MP 85.6	Clean culvert
MP 85.7	Clean culvert

MP 85.9 End Safety Improvements: HMA overlay; 2' shoulder widening; safety edge; rumble strips; and tree removal.
MP 86.9 End Approach to Segment 1

Segment 2 (approx. one-quarter on NFS)

MP 88.75 Begin Approach to Segment 2
MP 89.75 Begin SH 14B Safety Improvements²: HMA overlay; 2' shoulder widening; safety edge; rumble strips; and tree removal.
MP 90 Clean culvert
MP 90.3 Clean culvert
MP 90.4 Clean culvert
MP 90.5 Clean culvert
MP 90.6 Clean culvert
MP 90.8 Clean culvert
MP 91.3 Clean culvert
MP 91.9 Clean culvert
MP 92.4 Clean culvert
MP 92.75 End SH 14B Safety Improvements: HMA overlay; 2' shoulder widening; safety edge; rumble strips; and tree removal.
MP 93.75 End Approach to Segment 2

Segment 3 (approx. all on NFS)

MP 108.7 Approach to Segment 3 through 6³
MP 109.7 Begin SH 14B Safety Improvements²: HMA overlay; 2' shoulder widening; safety edge; rumble strips; and tree removal.
MP 109.8 Clean culvert
MP 110 Clean culvert
MP 110.1 Clean culvert
MP 110.3 Clean culvert
MP 110.4 Clean culvert
MP 110.5 End Safety Improvements: HMA overlay; high friction surface treatment; 2' shoulder widening; safety edge; rumble strips; and tree removal.

Segment 4 (approx. half on NFS)

MP 113.5 Begin SH 14B Safety Improvements¹: HMA overlay; *high friction surface treatment*; 2' shoulder widening; safety edge; rumble strips; remove loose rock behind barrier; and place concrete glare screen on top of barrier.
MP 113.6 Clean culvert
MP 113.7 Clean culvert
MP 113.9 Clean culvert
MP 114.0 End Safety Improvements: HMA overlay; *high friction surface treatment*; 2' shoulder widening; safety edge; rumble strips; remove loose rock behind barrier; and place concrete glare screen on top of barrier.

Segment 5 (little overlap with NFS)

MP 117.04 Begin SH 14B Safety Improvements²: HMA overlay; 2' shoulder widening; safety edge; rumble strips; and tree removal.
MP 117.2 Clean culvert
MP 117.25 Clean culvert
MP 118.0 End Safety Improvements: HMA overlay; 2' shoulder widening; safety edge; rumble strips; and tree removal.

Segment 6 (no overlap with NFS)

This activity falls within a category of actions which normally do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and, therefore, may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. This category of actions is identified in 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3) - Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.

Therefore, I am categorically excluding the described project from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment.

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. CDOT is the lead agency in this project and in assuring compliance and coordination from partner agencies. Thus, they achieved approval from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and tribes.

I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- **Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species** – While habitat conditions along the stream channel near the project are favorable for the threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse, areas near the highway and where the work will occur do not contain habitat elements used by the species. Most of these areas have been disturbed by maintenance activities. Given current habitat conditions and project description, the impacts resulting from the proposed project may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect, the Preble's meadow jumping mouse or destroy or adversely modify its designated critical habitat.

Coordination and consultation has occurred between CDOT and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to document this determination. Noted in that determination, CDOT will re-initiation consultation (and copy the USFS) if any of the following apply: 1) new information reveals effects of the action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not considered in this consultation; 2) the action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an adverse effect to the listed species or critical habitat that was not considered in this consultation; or 3) a new species is listed or critical habitat designated that may be affected by the action.

- **Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds** – No wetlands applicable to this project. The project occurs in the vicinity of floodplains and municipal watersheds and no effect is expected because the work involves repairs to an existing highway system.
- **Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas** – This project occurs mostly within the Wild & Scenic River Cache la Poudre Scenic River corridor. Most effects from the highway to the designation have already occurred. In order to reduce visual impacts of the improvements to the Wild and Scenic corridors, the following measures should be followed:
 - roadside fill and aggregate needs to match color and texture of what is natural to the site;

- any painted or installed unnatural materials (guardrails, signs, markers) that are not necessary for safety notifications should be neutral or natural in color; and
- no new material should be added within the active channel, nor should the channel be narrowed.
- **Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas** – None applicable to this project.
- **Research natural areas** – None applicable to this project.
- **American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites** – None applicable to this project. Based on the minor scope of work proposed for the project, limited to improvements on the existing disturbed highway prism within six segments of SH 14 bordering the Poudre River, there are no known or anticipated issues.
- **Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas** – State Highway 14 is identified as historically significant and is considered by CDOT to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. However, based on the minor scope of work proposed for the project, limited to improvements on the existing disturbed highway prism within six segments of SH 14 bordering the Poudre River (shoulder widening, mill/overlay, rumble strips, striping, etc.), there are no known or anticipated archaeology issues. The canyon bottom location, alignment, and general design (all character defining features) will remain intact. Similarly, effects to Section 4(f) requirements pertaining to this property are deemed *de minimus*.

In addition to the required resource assessment, botanical, engineering, recreation, and paleontological resources were considered. Native plants and plant communities are determined to occur in vicinity of the project activities.

To mitigate potential effects to botanical resources and to avoid the spread of noxious weeds, the following measures should be followed:

- erosion control products must not include agricultural byproducts;
- erosion control netting should be woven with non-fused joints;
- erosion control materials shall be biodegradable;
- avoid importing topsoil and embankment for the project, but soil can be moved between segments within the project; and
- USFS will provide the seed needed to reseed exposed sections of ground within the limits of the NFS (total acreage under five).

INTERESTED AND AFFECTED AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONS CONTACTED

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) and updated periodically during the analysis. No external comments were received.

Coordination and consultation occurred between the following entities:

- CDOT and USFWS regarding threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse
- CDOT and USFS regarding other protected species in the form of a Biological Evaluation
- CDOT and USFS regarding botanical, biological, engineering, recreation, Wild & Scenic River, and historical resources
- CDOT and the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office
- CDOT and appropriate tribal entities

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND CONSISTENCY WITH LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

This project is consistent with the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland 1997 Revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan and Amendments as required by the National Forest Management Act. This project is also consistent with other laws and regulations.

APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES

This decision is not subject to appeal or objection.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Implementation may occur immediately.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Laura Shaffer, Recreation Program Manager, Canyon Lakes Ranger District, Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland, laura.c.shaffer@usda.gov or 970-295-6720.



SIGNATURE

Kathleen K. Donahue

4/13/2020

Kathleen K. Donahue

Date

District Ranger

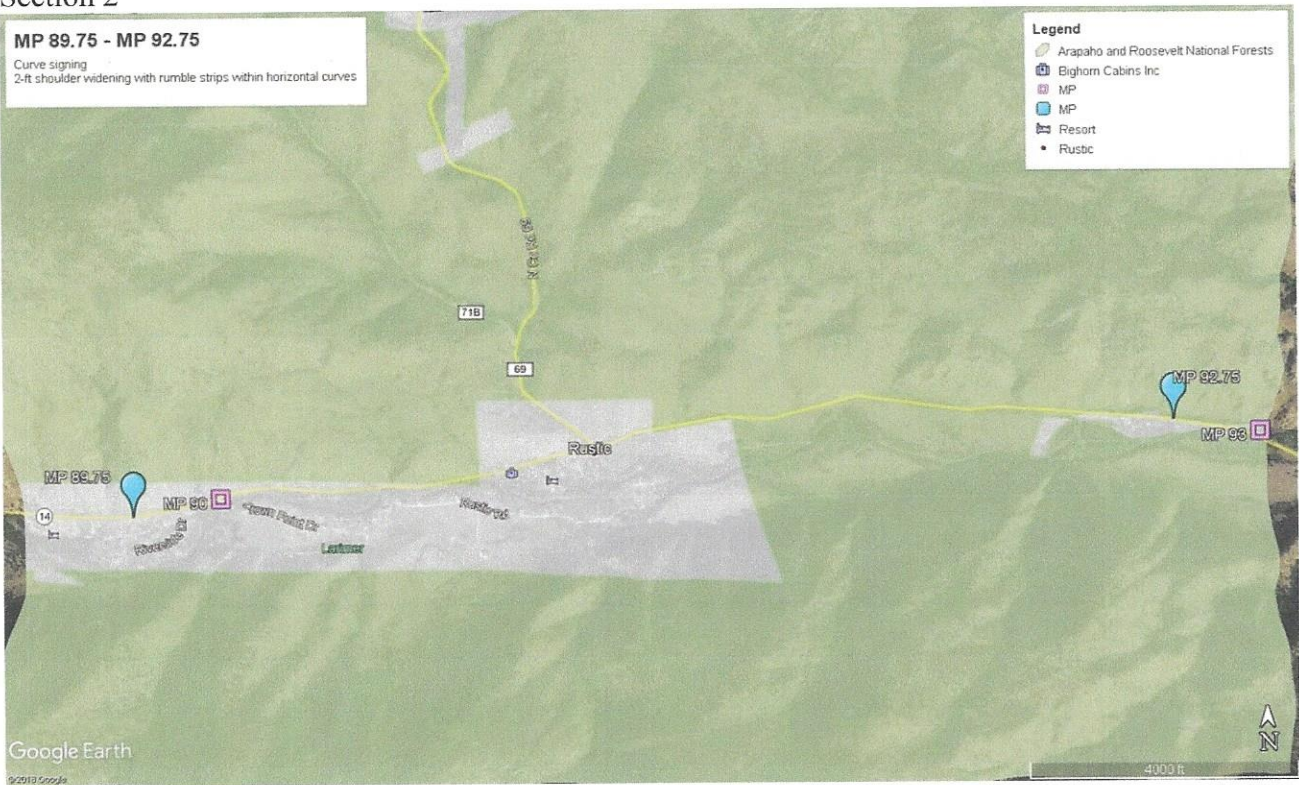
Canyon Lakes Ranger District

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Section 1



Section 2



Section 3

MP 109.7 - MP 110.5

Curve signing
2-ft shoulder widening with rumble strips

Legend

- Ansel Watrous Campground
- Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests
- MP
- MP 110



Section 4

MP 113.5 - 114.0

Mill and overlay with super-elevation improvements
High friction surface treatment
Curve signing
2-ft shoulder widening with rumble strips

Legend

- Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests
- MP



Section 5

MP 117.0 - 118.0

Curve signing
2-ft shoulder widening with rumble strips



Section 6 (no USFS land)

MP 120.0 - 120.33

Curve signing
2-ft shoulder widening with rumble strips

